

**Claims**

The following is a copy of Applicant's claims that identifies language being added with underlining ("\_\_\_") and language being deleted with strikethrough ("—"), as is applicable:

Claims 1- 19 (Cancelled).

20. (Currently amended) A clothing strap tensioning device in combination with clothing having rear shoulder straps, comprising:

an elastic member having a limited length and a geometry generally defined by substantially coplanar middle, left end, and right end portions; and wherein the elastic member defines a boundary having upper, lower, left and right edges; and

wherein the middle portion is substantially rectangular; and

wherein the upper edge slopes upwardly from the middle portion of the elastic member toward the left and right end portions thereof; and

wherein the lower edge slopes upwardly ~~from~~ from the middle portion of the elastic member toward the left and right end portions thereof; and

means integrated into the left end and right end portions for enabling releasable attachment of the end portions to each other to form the elastic member into a loop;

wherein each of said left and right end ~~portion~~ portions of the elastic member project upwardly and perpendicularly away from said middle portion, and wherein, upon

securing the tensioning device about one or more spaced-apart clothing rear shoulder straps, the clothing rear shoulder straps are drawn inwardly toward each other medially in a manner preventing twisting of the clothing rear shoulder straps.

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Previously presented) The clothing strap tensioning device of Claim 20, wherein the length of the middle portion is approximately equal to the combined lengths of the left and right end portions.

23. (Previously presented) The clothing strap tensioning device of Claim 20, wherein the left and right edges are substantially parallel.

24. (Currently amended) The clothing strap tensioning device of Claim 20, wherein the elastic member is attached to a slide, wherein the slide is slidable along the length of the clothing straps when the elastic member forms the loop with the left and right end portions.

25. (Previously presented) The clothing strap tensioning device of Claim 20, wherein the elastic member has an increased transverse width along corresponding segments of the left and right end portions adjacent to the middle portion.

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently amended) A clothing strap tensioning device in combination with clothing having rear shoulder straps, comprising:

an elastic member having a limited length, a substantially rectangular middle portion;

a left end portion coplanar with the middle portion, wherein the left end portion defines a first upper edge, a first lower edge, and a left edge; and

wherein the first upper and lower edges slope upwardly in the same plane from the middle portion to the left edge;

a right end portion coplanar with the middle and left end portions, wherein the right end portion defines a second upper edge, a second lower edge, and a right edge; and

wherein the second upper and lower edges slope upwardly in the same plane from the middle portion to the right edge; and

a releasably attachable element integrated into the left and right end portions for engaging the left and right end portions to form the elastic member into a loop; and

wherein, upon securing the tensioning device about one or more spaced-apart clothing straps, the ~~clothing~~ rear shoulder straps are drawn inwardly toward each other medially in a manner preventing twisting of the ~~clothing~~ rear shoulder straps.

28. (New) A method for drawing together two or more rear shoulder straps on a garment comprising the steps of:

Positioning a tensioning device about one or more rear shoulder straps on a garment, wherein the tensioning device comprises

an elastic member having a limited length and a geometry generally defined by substantially coplanar middle, left end, and right end portions; and wherein the elastic member defines a boundary having upper, lower, left and right edges; and

wherein the middle portion is substantially rectangular; and

wherein the upper edge slopes upwardly from the middle portion of the elastic member toward the left and right end portions thereof; and

wherein the lower edge slopes upwardly from the middle portion of the elastic member toward the left and right end portions thereof; and

means integrated into the left end and right end portions for enabling releasable attachment of the end portions to each other to form the elastic member into a loop;

wherein each of said left and right end portions of the elastic member project upwardly and perpendicularly away from said middle portion, and wherein, upon securing the tensioning device about one or more spaced-apart rear shoulder straps, the rear shoulder straps are drawn inwardly toward each other medially in a manner preventing twisting of the rear shoulder straps; and

securing the tensioning device about the rear shoulder straps.

29. (New) The method according to Claim 28, wherein the left and right edges are substantially parallel.

30. (New) The method according to Claim 28, wherein the elastic member is attached to a slide, wherein the slide is slidable along the length of the clothing straps when the elastic member forms the loop with the left and right end portions.